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fundamentals of that structure or of the ultimate values upon which it is based. In a very real sense, the educated group is a class with a vested interest. Consequently it is conservative and pragmatic rather than radical and speculative . . .

The closest approximation to a psychological literature resulting from these fundamental intellectual orientations are religious and secular didactic essays, public school texts on morality, self-help or "peace of mind" tracts, and satirical or didactic fiction and poetry. (Mosel 1961 provides an excellent discussion of contemporary Thai poetry.)

Addressed to the reading public at large, these writings do not purport to be concerned with any particular group or class of Thai society: peasants, Bangkokians, Northeasterners, or others. Since they are for the most part written by the educated elite, however, they tend to reflect their authors' interests and standards. To what extent their standards differ from those held by peasants is difficult to determine with precision, although impressionistically it would seem that in psychological questions the educated elite give considerably more attention to the importance of social forms, the desirability of pleasing others, and also reveal a greater sense of compulsiveness, achievement, and social uneasiness than do peasants. Villagers simply seem more relaxed and self-accepting. However, these differences are very much a matter of degree. A Bang Chan child who learns about proper modes of behavior from *Sombad Khoon Phuu Dii*, discussed below, may not have the same compulsion nor experience the same pressures to implement his studies as does the child of the Ministry of Education official who wrote the text. However, he thoroughly understands the teachings, their relevance and importance; knowing them is part of being Thai. A few illustrations will provide some of the flavor of these writings.

One of Thailand's most famous men of letters is M. R. Khukrit Pramoj, a publisher, editor, author, lecturer, and recently, movie actor. Educated in England and a member of the royalty, he is known to most Westerners as a kind of Siamese equivalent of Henry R. Luce, but to most Thai (although to no more than a handful of Bang Chaners, the majority having never even heard his name) he is known for his all-around knowledge of human affairs. His most popular work is *Panhaa Pracamwan*, or *Problems of Everyday Life*, a multi-volumed set of dialogues based on a column he wrote for his own newspaper in which he answers questions from hypothetical individuals who have "written" for advice on problems of ordinary living. These problems concern such matters as how to handle one's jealousy, how to treat those below and above one in the hierarchy, and how to control one's feelings of spleen and anger.

The following excerpt from volume iv of these essays (1952: 337–339) is not only representative of Khukrit's thinking, but bespeaks a

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relationships: within the family, usually in terms of the relative ages of people; elsewhere, in terms of age, wealth, power, knowledge, religious or governmental role. Secondly, they are based on the assumption that every individual, regardless of his position in the hierarchy, deserves respect. The first is a respect associated with the proper performance of one's role; the second, a recognition of the essential dignity of every human being.

The role of these respect patterns cannot be emphasized enough. Benedict, in her study (1946) of Thai culture at a distance, referred to the learning of the *waj*, or gesture of obeisance, as "the first teaching the child receives." Although the *waj* is perhaps not the very first social act the child learns, I have seen infants no more than two weeks old being guided by the mother in raising the palms of their little hands to the forehead in expression of deference to superiors. The older infant who can do this on his own almost always receives acknowledgments of approval and delight from the adults in attendance. An older sibling really means it when he says of his relationship with his younger brothers, "when I ask them to do some kind of work, they go and do it. They never disobey, and when there is no disobedience, there is no hatred. . . . Formerly, whenever there was entertainment somewhere I took them with me. My younger siblings love me a lot. . . ." His position in the authority structure assumes the respect of those younger than he, and they willingly grant it for, among other things, he plays his role well as the kindly superior who takes them with him whenever there is entertainment. All the polite little linguistic forms (honorifics, expletives suggesting status and, most important, ordinary kinship terminology with its specification of relative age) as well as kinesthetic forms (lowering the body while passing a seated older person, holding the younger between one's legs and with arms around him in a position of protection) also serve to emphasize the respect that people grant one another because of their differential status. Perhaps the most revealing illustration of the strength of these patterns, at least the authority pattern, was provided by a two-year-old toddler who pointed to the stomach of his pregnant mother and said with pride, "My younger sibling is in there. When he is born he will be *my* responsibility." Little doubt that when the child is born he will give his older brother his due.

With regard to the other respect form, recognizing the dignity of every human being, more than once I have heard parents say that they disliked giving their child a certain medicine "because it offends the baby; he does not like it. It is better not to give it to him than to hurt his feelings." Although I do not doubt that in some instances the parents were annoyed more by the screams of the child than anything else, I am also convinced that for the most part they were respecting his basic individuality and right

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Giggling is very often used in the marketplace when an item must be bargained over. Similarly, a villager who wants to quit working for another will usually preface his request with some giggling, although equally often he will just leave—saying absolutely nothing—and will later send a middleman to collect his wages and make the severance official. The latter alternative is prompted by the desire to avoid *all* awkwardness.

The third major form of the villagers' politeness—that associated with making a good impression on others—has to a certain extent been covered by the materials already presented. Thus, in terms of the actual manifestations, there is really little difference between flattering another person, for example, because it will make him feel good, because it will make getting something out of him much easier, or because it will make one appear much more attractive in his eyes. However, it is clear that the motivations in these three cases are all quite different. It is for this reason that this last category has been introduced. When villagers meet another person whom they regard as significant (and this by no means includes all their contacts) they do put forth considerable effort to make a good impression on him. And being polite—courteous, helpful, flattering—is one of the most suitable means for achieving this effect.

Discussion of this interactive mode would perhaps not be necessary were villagers themselves not so keenly aware of it. Village children are continually and consciously taught, by word and deed, the necessity always to put their best foot forward (cf. the earlier illustrations in *Characteristics of a Good Person*). Bang Chaners assess themselves and others in terms of their capacity to make themselves appealing: both the "good" and the "competent" person is one who can make himself attractive by speaking softly, gently, and if possible, beautifully and cleverly. Often villagers take offense at an individual who refuses to do this because his very refusal suggests that he does not feel respect for others. Again, it should be emphasized that we are talking here about the form of behavior, not the substance or commitment behind it.

What the ultimate psychological roots of this behavior are is unclear. It is apparent—largely because of the great attention given to formal considerations such as manners, proper speech, and the like—that this concern is not prompted primarily by the desire to be loved by others. Love would require a more substantial medium. Gaining the respect and approval of others is clearly an important component of the attitude, but one wonders why a people otherwise so self-loving and self-accepting should need their self-esteem repeatedly validated by others. Perhaps the most important reason behind the villagers' concern with impressing others really has little to do with the others themselves, although obviously at the behavioral level it implicates them—that is, I would suggest that the major factor behind the

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V

Analysis: The SCT's Exploration of Thai Personality[1]

Attitudes Toward Authority

The first area to be dealt with is in a sense the easiest. Thai attitudes toward authority represent what is perhaps the most explicitly expressed and highly ramified area of their social psychological life. The notion of authority—a sense of superordination and subordination—is an intrinsic part of their linguistic structure, it being impossible to address or refer to a person without indicating his social status relative to the self; two-week-old infants are taught to *waj*, or offer the gesture of obeisance to superiors; during elections, villagers say that they are going to vote for the prime minister because "he is our Master. He has been very good and kind to us. He is like our father, and we are like his children"; the entire structure of the family is predicated on a system of superordination and subordination, even to the extent of considering a twin born a few minutes ahead of his sibling the latter's social superior. Examples expressive of this emphasis in the workaday life of the villagers could be cited endlessly.

What is impressive in the data to follow is not only the near unanimity of villagers in responding positively to what are essentially neutral authority situations, but the tendency on the part of a large number to respond positively to the authority situation even when the authority figure is avowedly wrong. Many of their responses also make quite explicit the underlying ethical justifications for the authority system.

The first item, *"When the phuujinjaj told him to do it, he . . . ,"* is a

[1] Words and phrases appearing in parentheses in the responses on the following pages are for purposes of clarification. The few Thai words appearing in the responses are either "complex concepts" or "difficult to translate" terms, and have been retained mainly for those readers familiar with Thai. At the top of the table, the English language item that was originally prepared for the villagers appears first; it is followed by the best English translation of the actual Thai item given to informants, including the Thai pronouns that were used. Intra-sample differences (age, sex, religion, economic position), where important, are indicated in the text, not the tables.